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SUBJECT: PAN PARTY PRESIDENT FOCUSED ON ELECTIONS

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Charles V. Barclay. Reason
: 1.4 (b),(d).

¶1. (C) Summary. In his 3/12 meeting with the Ambassador, PAN Party President German Martinez focused on internal party politics and 2009 elections for the House of Deputies and Governors for a number of key states. Martinez expressed concern about the flow of drug money into election campaign coffers acknowledging PAN Party candidates are not above suspicion. He remained prepared to defend Secretary of Government Juan Mourino, under attack by the opposition on charges of influence peddling, but was worried he had may have received less than a full accounting from Mourino on his vulnerability to continued scrutiny. End Summary.

It's All About the Elections

¶2. (U) Martinez was keenly focused on leading his party's efforts to produce victories in 2009 elections to the House of Deputies and Governorships in several States. PRI has scored victories in several Governor races over the last year presently controlling 18 of Mexico's 31 states. Martinez sees himself as responsible for turning that trend around. He also wants PAN to retain the plurality it presently enjoys in the House of Deputies.

¶3. (U) Martinez conceded PAN faced an uphill battle as off-year elections traditionally favor the opposition. He signaled the party's desire to ride Calderon's coattails given his consistently high polling numbers. As PAN Party President he plans to focus on Calderon's strong record in going after organized crime, maintaining a stable economy, and producing compromises leading to adoption of key reforms.

¶4. (C) At the same time, Martinez expressed concern about influence of drug money in campaigns and on local politics. The government's efforts to fight traffickers had raised the stakes for both sides. Traffickers were throwing around considerable sums to buy off candidates. Some PAN Party candidates were not above taking the money. He was committed to ridding the party of these elements but he was worried about the overarching corrupting influence of drug money on the Mexican political scene.

Defending Mourino, For Better or Worse

¶5. (C) Martinez conveyed his commitment to Juan Mourino, a close confidant of President Calderon appointed in January to the post of Secretary of Government. Mourino is under attack by the PRD on grounds he improperly signed off on contracts benefiting his family's oil interests while he was Deputy Secretary of Energy during the Fox administration. Martinez

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planned to continue to defend Mourino publicly. He conceded however that Mexico's process for vetting candidates to high level posts was grossly lacking. He was also worried Mourino may not have shared all information about his potential vulnerability on this and other matters.

¶6. (C) Comment: Martinez won election as PAN Party President based on his close relationship to President Calderon. He clearly maintains regular contact with Calderon on policy and party matters lending the party a strong and united front. Martinez's record, however, will hinge on his ability to produce victories in 2009 races. The PRI's strong showing in recent races concerns him. He would like to ride Calderon's coattails given the President's continued strong showing in polls. Keeping drug money out of the election races, however, was a genuine concern given the stakes all sides attached to producing electoral gains and the important role money played to running strong campaigns. End Comment.

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